

Supporting Information

Copper-Catalyzed Aerobic Oxidative Synthesis of Aromatic Carboxylic Acids

Daoshan Yang, Haijun Yang and Hua Fu*

*Key Laboratory of Bioorganic Phosphorus Chemistry and Chemical Biology
(Ministry of Education), Department of Chemistry, Tsinghua University, Beijing
100084, P. R. China*

Email: fuhua@mail.tsinghua.edu.cn

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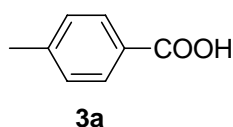
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General experimental procedures

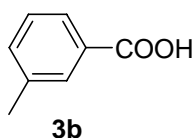
All reagents and solvents were obtained from commercial suppliers and used without further purification. CuI and CuBr were purchased from Alfa Aesar, and other reagents were purchased from Beijing Ouhe Technology Ltd. Co.. All reagents were weighed and handled in air at room temperature. Flash chromatography was performed on silica gel (200 ~ 300 mesh). Proton and carbon magnetic resonance spectra (^1H NMR and ^{13}C NMR) were recorded using tetramethylsilane (TMS) in the solvent of CDCl_3 as the internal standard (^1H NMR: TMS at 0.00 ppm, CHCl_3 at 7.24 ppm; ^{13}C NMR: CDCl_3 at 77.0 ppm) or using tetramethylsilane (TMS) in the solvent of $\text{DMSO}-d_6$ as the internal standard (^1H NMR: TMS at 0.00 ppm, DMSO at 2.50 ppm; ^{13}C NMR: DMSO at 40.0 ppm).

General procedure for synthesis of aromatic carboxylic acids (3a-u). Synthesis of aromatic carboxylic acids was performed under two conditions. For method **A**, a 10 mL Schlenk tube equipped with a magnetic stirring bar was charged with CuI (0.2 mmol, 38 mg), L-proline (0.2 mmol, 23 mg), Cs_2CO_3 (3 mmol, 978 mg for synthesis of **3o** and **3p**; 2 mmol, 652 mg for synthesis of others), aryl halide (1 mmol), malononitrile (2 mmol, 132 mg), DMSO (2 mL) (without previous anhydrous procedure), and the tube with an air balloon (1 atm.) was sealed and put into a pre-heated oil bath at 140 °C for 48 h. After the resulting solution was cooled to room temperature, DMSO was removed under rotary evaporation, and then 4 mL of HCl (1 M) was added to the residue (pH = 2 ~ 3). The solution was extracted with ethyl acetate (4 × 5 mL), the combined organic phase was concentrated, and the residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel to provide the desired product (Note: for product **3o** or **3p**, DMSO was removed under rotary evaporation, and then 4 mL of HCl (1 M) was added to the residue (pH = 2 ~ 3). Water was removed under rotary evaporation, and the residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel to provide the desired product). For method **B**, a 10 mL Schlenk tube equipped with a magnetic stirring bar was charged with CuI (0.2 mmol, 38 mg), L-proline (0.2 mmol, 23 mg), Cs_2CO_3 (3 mmol, 978 mg for synthesis of **3o** and **3p**; 2 mmol, 652 mg for synthesis of others), and aryl halide if a solid (1 mmol). The tube was evacuated twice

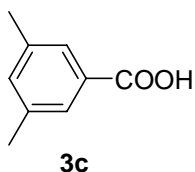
and back-filled with nitrogen. Aryl halide as a liquid (1 mmol), malononitrile (2 mmol, 132 mg), and DMSO (1 mL) were sequentially added at room temperature under a stream of nitrogen, and the tube was sealed and put into a pre-heated oil bath at 130 °C for 24 h under a positive pressure of nitrogen, and the tube was opened to allow air in, and the following reaction in air was performed at 140 °C for 12 h. After the resulting solution was cooled to room temperature, the work-up procedure was similar to Method A.



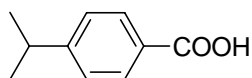
4-Methylbenzoic acid (3a).¹ Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (3:1). White solid. mp 181-182 °C (lit.¹ 181-182 °C). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 600 MHz, ppm) δ 12.59 (s, br, 1H), 7.93 (d, 2H, *J* = 8.3 Hz), 7.18 (d, 2H, *J* = 8.3 Hz), 2.34 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 150 MHz, ppm) δ 172.7, 144.8, 130.4, 129.4, 126.7, 21.8. ESI-MS [M+H]⁺ m/z 137.2.



3-Methylbenzoic acid (3b).² Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (2:1). White solid. mp 112-114 °C (lit.² 111-112 °C). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz, ppm) δ 11.85 (s, br, 1H), 7.94-7.92 (m, 2H), 7.44-7.37 (m, 2H), 2.47 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz, ppm) δ 172.7, 138.4, 134.7, 130.8, 129.3, 128.5, 127.5, 21.4. ESI-MS [M+H]⁺ m/z 137.5.

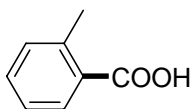


3,5-Dimethylbenzoic acid (3c).³ Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (3:1). White solid. mp 165-166 °C (lit.³ 161-162 °C). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz, ppm) δ 11.26 (s, br, 1H), 7.79 (s, 2H), 7.25 (m, 1H), 2.38 (s, 6H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz, ppm) δ 172.6, 138.3, 135.6, 129.2, 128.0, 21.2. ESI-MS [M-H]⁻ m/z 149.5.



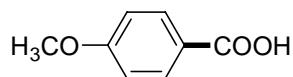
3d

4-Isopropylbenzoic acid (3d).⁴ Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (3:1). White solid. mp 114-115 °C. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz, ppm) δ 12.76 (s, br, 1H), 7.86 (d, 2H, *J* = 7.9 Hz), 7.25 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.9 Hz), 2.96 (m, 1H, *J* = 6.8 Hz), 1.19 (d, 6H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz, ppm) δ 172.4, 155.5, 130.5, 127.0, 126.7, 34.4, 23.8. ESI-MS [M+H]⁺ m/z 165.2.



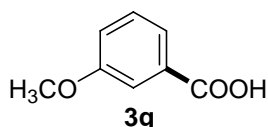
3e

2-Methylbenzoic acid (3e).⁵ Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (3:1). White solid. mp 101-102 °C (lit.⁵ 106.0-105.5 °C). ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 300 MHz, ppm) δ 12.84 (s, br, 1H), 7.87 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.9 Hz), 7.52-7.47 (m, 1H), 7.36-7.31 (m, 2H), 2.56 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 75 MHz, ppm) δ 169.2, 139.5, 132.2, 132.0, 131.0, 130.7, 126.3, 21.7. ESI-MS [M-H]⁻ m/z 136.5.



3f

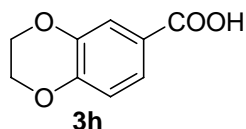
4-Methoxybenzoic acid (3f).⁶ Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (2:1). White solid. mp 184-185 °C (lit.⁶ 186-187 °C). ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 600 MHz, ppm) δ 12.63 (s, br, 1H), 7.89 (d, 2H, *J* = 8.9 Hz), 7.01 (d, 2H, *J* = 8.9 Hz), 3.81 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 150 MHz, ppm) δ 167.5, 163.3, 131.7, 123.5, 114.3, 55.9. ESI-MS [M-H]⁻ m/z 151.4.



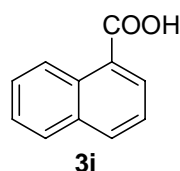
3g

3-Methoxybenzoic acid (3g).⁷ Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (3:1). White solid. mp 107-108 °C (lit.⁷ 107-109 °C). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz, ppm) δ 7.72 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.9 Hz), 7.63 (s, 1H), 7.39 (t, 1H, *J* = 7.9 Hz), 7.18 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.9 Hz), 3.88 (s,

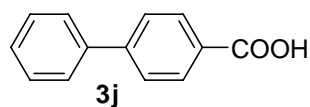
3H). ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 75 MHz, ppm) δ 172.3, 159.7, 130.7, 129.6, 122.8, 120.6, 114.5, 55.6. ESI-MS $[\text{M}-\text{H}]^-$ m/z 151.5.



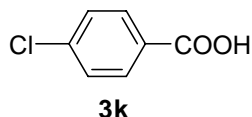
2,3-Dihydrobenzo[b][1,4]dioxine-6-carboxylic acid (3h).⁸ Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (3:1). White solid. mp 135-137 °C (lit.⁸ 136 °C). ^1H NMR ($\text{DMSO}-d_6$, 300 MHz, ppm) δ 12.74 (s, br, 1H), 7.49 (dd, 1H, $J = 8.3$ Hz), 7.43 (d, 1H, $J = 2.1$ Hz), 7.00 (d, 1H, $J = 8.6$ Hz), 4.33 (dd, 4H). ^{13}C NMR ($\text{DMSO}-d_6$, 75 MHz, ppm) δ 167.2, 148.0, 143.5, 124.3, 123.5, 118.7, 117.6, 64.9, 64.4. ESI-MS $[\text{M}-\text{H}]^-$ m/z 179.7.



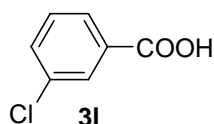
1-Naphthoic acid (3i).⁹ Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (2:1). White solid. mp 154-155 °C (lit.⁹ 162 °C). ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 300 MHz, ppm) δ 9.10 (d, 1H, $J = 8.9$ Hz), 8.42 (d, 1H, $J = 7.2$ Hz), 8.11 (d, 1H, $J = 7.9$ Hz), 7.93 (d, 1H, $J = 8.3$ Hz), 7.68 (t, 1H, $J = 8.3$ Hz), 7.60-7.54 (m, 2H). ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 75 MHz, ppm) δ 172.9, 134.7, 131.9, 131.8, 128.8, 128.2, 126.3, 126.0, 125.8, 124.6. ESI-MS $[\text{M}-\text{H}]^-$ m/z 171.5.



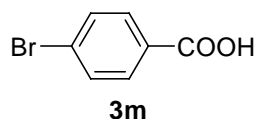
[1,1'-Biphenyl]-4-carboxylic acid (3j).¹⁰ Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (3:1). Yellow solid. mp 224-226 °C (lit.¹⁰ 224-225 °C). ^1H NMR ($\text{DMSO}-d_6$, 300 MHz, ppm) δ 12.98 (s, br, 1H), 8.02 (d, 2H, $J = 8.3$ Hz), 7.80 (d, 2H, $J = 8.3$ Hz), 7.74 (d, 2H, $J = 8.6$ Hz), 7.50 (t, 2H), 7.42 (t, 1H). ^{13}C NMR ($\text{DMSO}-d_6$, 75 MHz, ppm) δ 167.7, 144.8, 139.6, 130.5, 130.1, 129.6, 128.8, 127.5, 127.4. ESI-MS $[\text{M}-\text{H}]^-$ m/z 279.6.



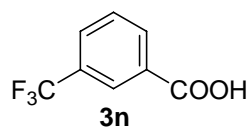
4-Chlorobenzoic acid (3k).¹¹ Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (3:1). White solid. mp 250 °C (lit.¹¹ 243 °C). ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 300 MHz, ppm) δ 13.17 (s, br, 1H), 7.95 (d, 2H, *J* = 7.9 Hz), 7.57 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.9 Hz). ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 75 MHz, ppm) δ 166.5, 137.8, 131.3, 129.6, 128.7. ESI-MS [M-H]⁻ *m/z* 155.6.



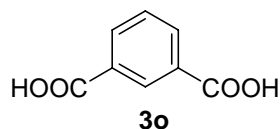
3-Chlorobenzoic acid (3l).¹² Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (3:1). White solid. mp 137-138°C (lit.¹² 155.8-156.8 °C). ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 300 MHz, ppm) δ 13.38 (s, br, 1H), 7.95 (m, 2H), 7.75 (d, 1H), 7.60 (m, 1H). ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 75 MHz, ppm) δ 166.6, 133.9, 133.5, 133.2, 131.2, 129.4, 128.4. ESI-MS [M-H]⁻ *m/z* 155.5.



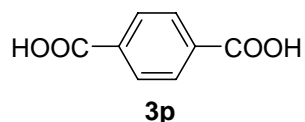
4-Bromobenzoic acid (3m).¹³ Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (3:1). White solid. mp 256-257 °C (lit.¹³ 252-254°C). ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 300 MHz, ppm) δ 13.17 (s, br, 1H), 7.87 (d, 2H, *J* = 8.6 Hz), 7.71 (d, 2H, *J* = 8.6 Hz). ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 75 MHz, ppm) δ 167.1, 132.2, 131.8, 130.5, 127.4. ESI-MS [M-H]⁻ *m/z* 201.0.



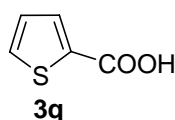
3-(Trifluoromethyl)benzoic acid (3n).¹⁴ Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (3:1). White solid. mp 180-182 °C (lit.¹⁴ 180-183 °C). ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 300 MHz, ppm) δ 13.49 (s, br, 1H), 8.22 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.9 Hz), 8.17 (s, 1H), 7.99 (d, 2H, *J* = 7.9 Hz), 7.76 (t, 1H, *J* = 7.9 Hz). ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 75 MHz, ppm) δ 166.5, 133.7, 132.4, 130.6, 129.9 (q, *J* = 33.0 Hz), 126.0, 122.5. ESI-MS [M+H]⁺ *m/z* 191.0.



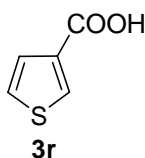
Isophthalic acid (3o).¹⁵ Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (1:1). White solid. mp 280 °C (lit.¹⁵ 345 °C). ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 300 MHz, ppm) δ 13.26 (s, br, 2H), 8.49 (s, 1H), 8.17 (d, 2H, *J* = 7.9 Hz), 7.65 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.9 Hz). ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 75 MHz, ppm) δ 167.1, 133.9, 131.8, 130.5, 129.7. ESI-MS [M-H]⁻ *m/z* 165.6..



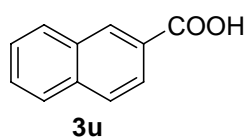
Terephthalic acid (3p).¹⁶ Eluent ethyl acetate. White solid. mp 280-300°C (lit.¹⁶ 280-300 °C). ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 300 MHz, ppm) δ 13.30 (s, br, 2H), 8.06 (s, 4H). ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 75 MHz, ppm) δ 167.2, 134.9, 129.9. ESI-MS [M-H]⁻ *m/z* 165.6.



Thiophene-2-carboxylic acid (3q).¹⁷ Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (3:1). Yellow solid. mp 152-154 °C (lit.¹⁷ 130-132 °C). ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 300 MHz, ppm) δ 13.06 (s, br, 1H), 7.88 (d, 1H, *J* = 4.8 Hz), 7.74 (d, 1H, *J* = 3.8 Hz). ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 75 MHz, ppm) δ 163.4, 135.2, 133.8, 133.7, 128.7. ESI-MS [M-H]⁻ *m/z* 127.7.

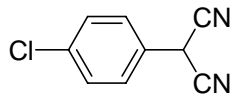


Thiophene-3-carboxylic acid (3q).¹⁸ Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (3:1). Yellow solid. mp 139-140 °C (lit.¹⁸ 137-138 °C). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz, ppm) δ 11.72 (s, br, 1H), 8.23 (s, 1H), 7.57 (d, 1H, *J* = 4.1 Hz), 7.35 (d, 1H, *J* = 4.1 Hz). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz, ppm) δ 168.4, 134.8, 133.1, 128.3, 126.6. ESI-MS [M-H]⁻ *m/z* 127.8.



2-Naphthoic acid (3u).¹⁹ Eluent petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (3:1). Yellow solid. mp 180-182 °C (lit.¹⁹ 180-183 °C). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz, ppm) δ 8.73 (s, 1H), 8.13

(d, 1H, $J = 8.6$ Hz), 8.00 (d, 1H, $J = 7.89$ Hz), 7.92. (m, 2H), 7.65-7.7.56 (m, 2H). ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 75 MHz, ppm) δ 172.3, 136.0, 132.4, 132.3, 129.6, 128.8, 128.4, 127.9, 126.5, 126.9, 125.5. ESI-MS $[\text{M-H}]^-$ m/z 171.4.



4

2-(4-Chlorophenyl)malononitrile (4).²⁰ It was prepared via coupling of 1-chloro-4-iodobenzene with malononitrile according to the previous procedure.²⁰ Yellow solid. ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 300 MHz, ppm) δ 7.47 (dd, 4H), 5.06 (s, 1H). ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 75 MHz, ppm) δ 137.0, 130.4, 128.7, 124.8, 111.5, 27.7. ESI-MS $[\text{M-H}]^-$ m/z 175.9.

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